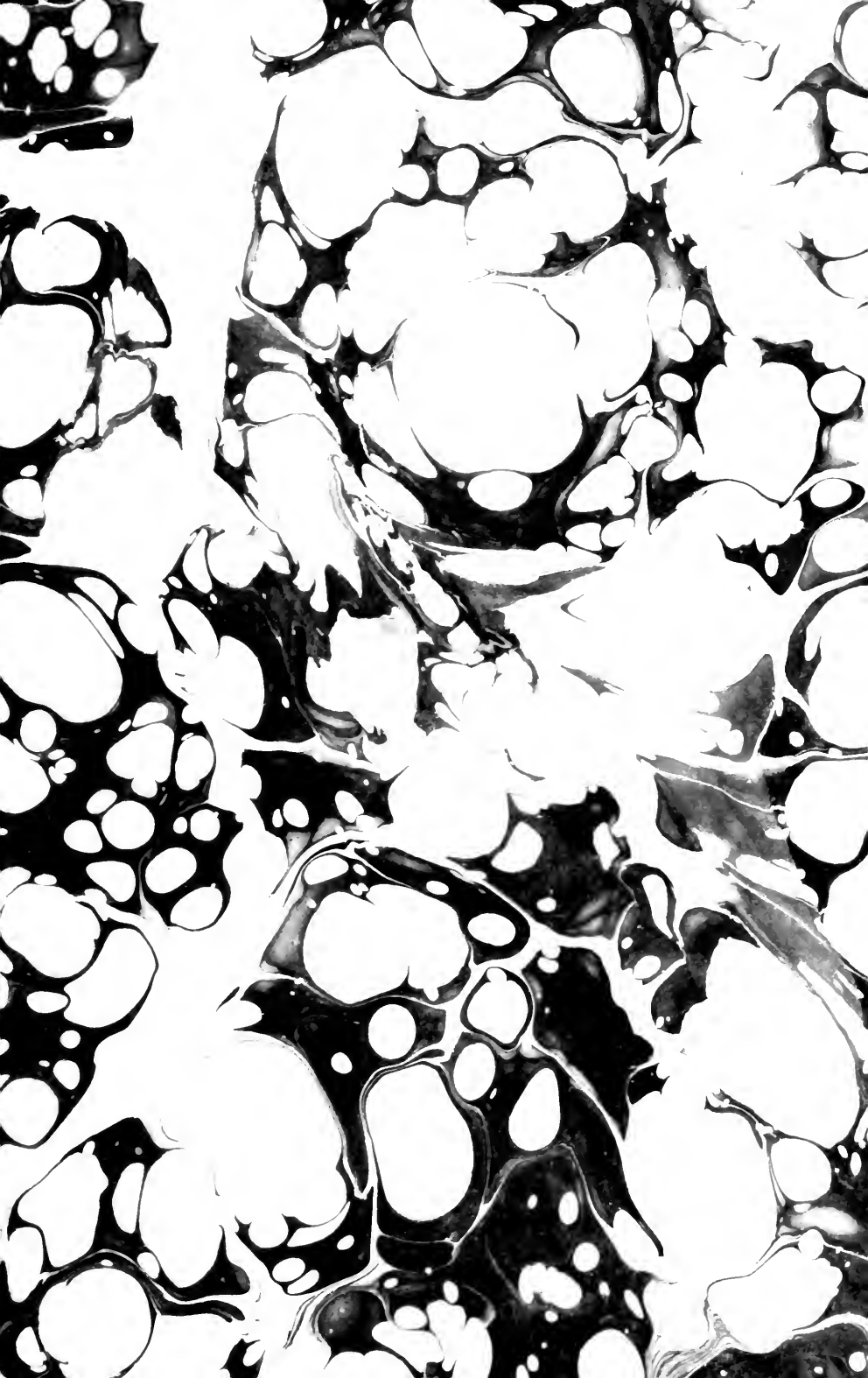

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A

SHORT ADDRESS

TO THE

PUBLIC,

ON THE

PRACTICE OF CASHIERING MILITARY OFFICERS WITHOUT A TRIAL;

AND A

VINDICATION

OF THE

CONDUCT AND POLITICAL OPINIONS OF THE AUTHOR.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

HIS CORRESPONDENCE

WITH THE

SECRETARY AT WAR.

By HUGH LORD SEMPILL.

LONDON:

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1793

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CORRESPONDENCE

WITH THE

SECRETARY AT WAR,

AND OTHER

OFFICIAL PAPERS.

War Office, Nov. 30, 1792.

MY LORD,

I HAVE it in command from the King, to notify to your Lordſhip, that his Majeſty has no further occaſion for your ſervices; and that you are, from this day, no longer to conſider yourſelf as a Lieutenant in the Third Regiment of Foot Guards: But his Majeſty has been graciouſly pleaſed to permit you to receive from

the officer, whom his Majeſty ſhall think fit to appoint, to the vacant Lieutenancy, the regulated value of that Commiſſion.

I am,
My Lord,
Your Lordſhip's
Moſt obedient Servant,
GEO. YONGE.

Right Hon.
Lord Sempill.

St. James's Hotel,
30th Nov. 1792.

SIR,

I HAVE juſt received your letter, informing me that you have it in command from the King to notify to me, that his Majeſty has no further occaſion for my ſervices; and that I am, from this day, no longer to conſider myſelf as a Lieutenant in the third regiment of Guards: but you do not aſſign any reaſon for a meaſure ſo

unuſal as ſuperſeding an officer, whoſe conduct has not been impeached.

As I am not ſenſible of having acted, in any reſpect, inconſiſtent with my duty, or that any part of my conduct through life has been deſerving of the King's diſpleaſure, I have to requeſt that you will, in juſtice to a character, hitherto, I truſt, unreproached, inform me of the reaſons which have moved you, or the King's miniſters, to adviſe his Majeſty to diſpoſe of my commiſſion in a manner ſo injurious, which I ſo little expected, and as little deſerve.

If I have been accuſed of having done any thing which would, in the opinion of his Majeſty's miniſters, diſqualify me for my ſituation, I cannot doubt that you will give me an opportunity fairly to meet the charge, and to prove, as I hope I ſhall at all times be able to do, that my conduct has been conſiſtent

with my duty as an Officer and a Citizen.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your, &c.
SEMPILL.

To Sir George Yonge.

St. James's Hotel,
30th Nov. 1792.

To Col. Grinfield.

SIR,

I HAVE received a letter from the Secretary at War, telling me that he has it in command from the King to notify to me, that I am no longer to conſider myſelf as a Lieutenant in the third regiment of Guards, but without informing me of the reaſon of my removal. And as a meaſure ſo unuſual, may be thought to reflect on my character, I have to requeſt, that you will give me the ſatisfaction to inform me, whether my conduct as an officer, has,

at any time, ſince I have been under your command, been deſerving of cenſure.

I have the honor to be, &c.

SEMPILL.

Orderly Room, 3d. Gds.
Dec. 1, 1792.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordſhip's letter of this date; in anſwer thereto I moſt readily acknowledge, that ſince the regiment has been under my command, I have every reaſon to be ſatisfied with your military conduct.

I have the honor to be,
My Lord,
Your Lordſhip's
Moſt obedient and
Humble Servant,
W. GRINFIELD.
1ſt Majr. Comms. 3d Gs.

Lord Sempill.

3d Guards, Orderly Room,
Dec. 1, 1792.

MY LORD,

I AM directed by the commanding officer to acquaint your Lordſhip, that he received, yeſterday, his Majeſty's order, through the Secretary at War, of which the encloſed is a copy.—In compliance therewith, I am to ſignify to your Lordſhip that the regulated price (1500l.) of the commiſſion lately held by you, is at your command, in the hands of Meſſrs. Roſs and Ogilvie, agents to the regiment.

I am your Lordſhip's
Very humble ſervant,
JOHN HENRY LOFT.
Enſign and Acting Adjutant.

Lord Sempill.

War Office, Nov. 30, 1792.

SIR,

HAVING this day, by his Majeſty's order, notified to Lord Sempill, that his Majeſty has no further occaſion for his ſervices, and that he is no longer to conſider himſelf as a Lieutenant in the third regiment of Foot Guards, but that his Majeſty allows Lord Sempill to receive from the officer whom his Majeſty ſhall think fit to appoint to the vacant Lieutenancy, the regulated value of that commiſſion: I have the honor to acquaint you therewith for the information of the Duke of Argyle, and to deſire that his Grace's recommendation of the officers for purchaſe in conſequence of the ſaid vacancy,

may

may be tranſmitted to me with as little delay as poſſible.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your moſt obedient
Humble ſervant,
(Signed) GEO. YONGE.
Officer commanding
the 3d regt. of Foot Guards.

War Office, Dec. 3d, 1792.

MY LORD,

I AM to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordſhip's letter of the 30th of laſt month.

When I informed your Lordſhip, that his Majeſty had no further occaſion for your ſervice, and that you would be allowed to receive the regulated value of your late commiſſion in the 3d regiment of Foot Guards, I communicated

communicated all that I had in command from his Majeſty to notify to your Lordſhip.

I have the honor to be,
My Lord,
Your Lordſhip's
Moſt obedient
Humble ſervant,
GEO. YONGE.

Right Hon.
Lord Sempill.

St. James Hotel,
Dec. 14, 1792.

SIR,

I requeſted in my letter to you of the 30th November, that you would inform me of the reaſons of my being ſuperſeded, and that you would give me an opportunity of vindicating my character; to which you gave me no other anſwer, than that you communicated to me all that you had in command

command from his Majeſty. I have now to requeſt, before I appeal to another tribunal, that I may be tried by a court martial, which I conceive I have a right to demand.

I have likewiſe to inform you, that I received, in conſequence of your directions to the commanding officer, a notification, that the regulated value of my commiſſion was lodged at the agent's, which I have declined accepting, until I inform myſelf whether my receiving it would bar my claim to promotion.

I have the honour to be, &c.

SEMPILL.

To the Secretary at War.

War Office,
Dec. 20, 1792.

My Lord,

I AM honored with your Lordſhip's letter of the 14th inſt. and having

having yeſterday laid it before his Majeſty, I am commanded to acquaint you that his Majeſty has not thought fit to grant the requeſt contained in that letter.

Your Lordſhip, not being at preſent poſſeſſed of any rank in the army, can have no claim to promotion—and of courſe, your future ſituation in that reſpect, will, in no degree, be affected by your acceptance or by your refuſal of the ſum which his Majeſty has been graciouſly pleaſed to allow you to receive, as the regulated value of your late commiſſion in the Foot Guards.

I have the honor to be,
Your Lordſhip's
Moſt obedient humble ſervant,
GEO. YONGE.

Lord Sempill.

My

MY correſpondence with the Secretary at War being now cloſed, I take the liberty to appeal (though ſuch appeals be proſcribed by the new Burkean code,*) from the fiat of the court, to the juſtice of the nation.

In May or June laſt, having been informed by the Adjutant that I was eldeſt Lieutenant, and officially required to declare if I would purchaſe, I anſwered, that I would purchaſe at the regulated price; and a few days after, in a letter to the Commanding Officer or Adjutant, I propoſed to give four thouſand pounds for the Captain-Lieutenancy, †

* See Mr. Burke's ſpeech on Le Brun's Report, in the Morning Chronicle of Dec. 29.

† The regulated value of a company is the ſame with that of a Lieutenant-Colonelcy of the line, 3,500l.; that of a Captain-Lieutenancy 2,600l.

provided

provided I ſhould not be required to give a certificate reſpecting the regulation; which propoſal was rejected. I afterwards relinquiſhed my claim as eldeſt, in favour of Captain Barnet, who was recommended in the uſual form: but the Secretary at War inſiſted on Colonel Pelham, the Captain-Lieutenant, ſelling to the Marquis of Huntley. I relinquiſhed a ſecond time my claim as firſt for purchaſe in favour of Captain Barnet, who was promoted to a company: and though Lord Huntley was appointed ſome weeks before Colonel Barnet, the King, with his Majeſty's wonted love of juſtice, marked as ſtrongly as poſſible his diſapprobation of the conduct of the Secretary at War, by ordering Mr. Barnet's commiſſion to bear the ſame date with Lord Huntley's, which, according to the rules of the army, made Mr. Barnet, who was an old captain, precede Lord Huntley.

I have

I have mentioned theſe circumſtances, in order to eſtabliſh my claim to rank above Captain Stuart, who, by my removal, became eldeſt Lieutenant; in caſe my ſervices ſhould at any future time be accepted of.

A SHORT

A

SHORT ADDRESS, &c.

THE Secretary at War having denied my requeſt of a trial, and refuſed to inform me of the reaſons of my being ſuperceded, the vindication of my character, as well as my duty to the public, to which every officer, civil and military, is accountable, obliges me to make this appeal.

I ſolemnly declare, and thoſe who know my habitual indolence, as well as my marked abhorrence of faction, will readily believe, that I am not influenced

either by private intereſt or party ſpirit. I have not even communicated my intention to write this vindication to any perſon, except a learned friend, for whoſe opinion I have the higheſt reſpect, whom I had occaſion to ſee a few days ago on private buſineſs, and who gave me his advice in theſe words: "Publiſh a vindication of your conduct "as an officer, and a declaration of "your political principles."

No particular part of my conduct is denounced, though the whole of it is attacked by inſinuation. But the refuſal of a court-martial, the commanding officer's letter declaring my military conduct to be blameleſs, as well as the teſtimony of the corps, ſufficiently warrant me to aſſert, that my conduct, as an officer, in the moſt extenſive ſenſe

of

of the phraſe, is unimpeached, and irreproachable.

It muſt, then, be my political conduct which has incurred ſo ſtrong a mark of the King's diſpleaſure, or rather of the diſpleaſure of his Majeſty's Miniſters.

And it is of no ſmall importance to the army, and to the public, to conſider, whether an influence, unconſtitutional and dangerous, is not derived from the power of caſhiering officers, without a trial: Whether it does not prevent men of independent principles from ſerving in the army, and enſlave thoſe who have laid out too great a proportion of their fortunes in purchaſing commiſſions, without having been aware that they were ſurrendering the freedom of opinion, and relinquiſhing the franchiſes of citizens.

It was not in the ſtrong features of patriotiſm, ſo elegantly delineated by the Roman and Grecian hiſtorians, that I was taught to trace the character of a freeman; nor in the antiquities of Greece and Rome, that I was taught to ſtudy the principles of conſtitutional liberty; but in the political conſtitutions of the Anglo-Saxons, the wiſeſt, and the moſt friendly to mankind, which hiſtory has furniſhed for the inſtruction of men.

I was taught, from the firſt moment that I was capable of knowing what right and duty mean, that it is the chief right, and the chief duty of every Briton, to claim that conſtitutional freedom, which the wiſdom and virtue of our Saxon anceſtors aſſerted and eſtabliſhed, and to reſiſt every attempt

to leſſen or to deſtroy it, whether by the towering pretenſions of prerogative, or by the inſidious and more dangerous attacks of ſecret influence.

Alfred, who brought the Saxon conſtitution as near perfection as the barbarity and ſuperſtition of the age would admit of, is the only legiſlator, the late National Aſſembly of France not excepted, who knew how to govern the people by the people, to unite the parts, and to organize the whole, by the principle of repreſentation, the ignorance of which principle prevented the perfection of the ancient republics. And it is impoſſible to contemplate this monument of wiſdom and patriotiſm, without regretting, that an opportunity was loſt, on the expulſion of the tyrannical race of Stuart, when the only two

blots in the Saxon government, the villanage of the peaſants, and the influence of the clergy, were both nearly wiped away, to regain theſe bleſſings, our long loſt rights, and to perfect a a conſtitution the admiration of every ſucceeding age; the only one which has ever furniſhed the means of collecting the public will, and of a conſtant exerciſe of political liberty; the loſs of which, by the Norman conqueſt, cauſed ſo much blood to be ſhed during ſix centuries, and the reſtoration of which would probably prevent a drop being ſhed, for ſix centuries to come.

With theſe impreſſions, I have beheld the ſtruggles of contending parties, without enliſting under the banners of either.

When

When I was called upon to exerciſe the function of an elective peer, I did it in the manner which I conceived to be moſt conducive, not to the intereſt of thoſe with whom I acted only, but to that of the country. I confeſs that I at firſt declined voting, becauſe I thought that the peerage elections had long been a diſgrace to the peerage and to the nation. When a party was formed profeſſedly to ſupport the independence of the peerage, and to reſiſt miniſterial interference, I heartily joined it, to ſhew my abhorrence of venality, and my contempt of the inſolent and illegal mandates of a Secretary of State.

If theſe ſentiments, and this conduct are deſerving of the king's diſ-

pleaſure, I confeſs that I have deſerved it.

In order to vindicate my conduct in Scotland, it is neceſſary that I ſhould curſorily review (I will endeavour to do it in very few words) the events and the polity of former times, which had reduced the country to the deplorable ſituation that called forth the exertions of the excellent citizens with whom I acted, whoſe rights it is my duty, and ſhall be the buſineſs of my life, to defend.

The union of the crowns, and the removal of the ſeat of government, enabled the King to alienate the affections of the Scotch nobility from their country, and, by corrupting the Parliament,

Parliament, to enſlave the people, among whom he had, a ſhort time before, been the moſt limited monarch in Europe. The Scotch, who had uniformly, till then, reſiſted every ſtretch of the prerogative, with a firmneſs ſcarcely to be equalled in hiſtory, were, by the influence of the Engliſh treaſury, completely ſubdued.

From the union of the crowns, till the union of the kingdoms, Scotland was treated like a conquered province. Such acts of parliament as were contrary to the new notions of prerogative, were mutilated or deſtroyed; and every attempt to aſſert her ancient rights, or the freedom of trade, was conſidered as an act of rebellion.

The

The union of the kingdoms, garbled as the treaty was, rendered her ſituation ſomewhat more tolerable. But the improvement, owing to the defect of the repreſentation, and the confirmation of the feudal juriſdiction was ſo ſlow, as to be ſcarcely perceptible in fifty years. After the paſſing of the juriſdiction act, the progreſs was comparatively rapid. In one town, the enterprizing ſpirit of a few individuals, in ſpite of every obſtacle, was attended with wonderful ſucceſs. Glaſgow, in 1770, enjoyed a very great proportion of the American colony trade; and ſome of her merchants had acquired very conſiderable fortunes. But the benefit of this trade was felt in the neighbourhood of Glaſgow only; and even there it was not of ſo much ſer-

vice

vice as the manufactures of Paiſley; for the greateſt part of the return, inſtead of increaſing domeſtic induſtry, was employed in purchaſing the manufactured commodities of other countries to export to America.

The independence of America gave a ſudden and a very beneficial turn to the trade of Scotland.

When Dr. Smith publiſhed his book, which ſhews that "*Colonies are commercially uſeleſs, as well as politically miſchievous,*" thoſe who thought themſelves intereſted in the continuance of the monopoly, and who could not controvert the juſtneſs of his reaſoning, were raſh enough to aſſert, that experience evinced the fallacy of his theory; but the American Revolution, and the conſequent Revolution in the trade of

Scotland,

Scotland, are a practical proof of its truth.

The capital which had been forced, by the monopoly, into the colony trade, returned to its natural channel, and is now employed in manufactures at home, particularly in the manufacture of muſlin, and a variety of cotton goods, and puts in motion, in this new employment, at leaſt ten times as much domeſtic induſtry as the colony trade, which was ſaid to be ſo advantageous.

The American Revolution is ſtill more important in a political, than in a commercial point of view. It exhibits a model of a well organized community, of a government of all by all, which affords protection alike to every citizen, without diſtinction of religion, or of rank; and forms a ſtriking contraſt with

with the European governments, where there is one law for the rich, and another for the poor.

The American pays no more to the expence of the government, than he is ſenſible is neceſſary, and he ſees expended; and not, as in ſome European governments, where the induſtrious labourer is robbed, by taxes, of one half of the earnings of his labour, to fatten the profligate tools of power, and to pamper the inſolence of thoſe, who, confounding truſt with right, claim to be tyrants, by the title of inheritance, or of eloquence, and to revel on the plunder of the ſwiniſh multitude.*

The

* In every country where the government is, in any degree, ariſtocratic, the rich and the privileged have invented a variety of epithets, to denote their own excellence, and the inferiority of their fellow citizens, who have no property in the land, and who ſupport themſelves by labour, or trade. In France, before the

The people of Scotland are bound by laws which they have no voice in making, and are forced to pay taxes, to which they have not conſented by themſelves or their repreſentatives. The burgeſſes are diveſted of all the franchiſes of citizens, and, as if they were

the late Revolution, ſo juſtly execrated by thoſe who are ſenſible of the bleſſings of a wiſe diſpenſation of privileges, places, and penſions, all thoſe who did not inherit privilege, hold offices under the crown, or who had not amaſſed, from the plunder of the public, by farms and contracts, fortunes ſufficient to purchaſe diſtinction, were diſtinguiſhed by the appellations of *peuple* and *bas peuple*.

In the claſſic language of an Engliſh ſtateſman, ſo celebrated for his humanity, and his learning, that he has been called the ornament of the Britiſh parliament, and of Britiſh literature, the *peuple*, and *bas peuple* of Britain, namely, ninety-nine in a hundred of the whole community, are diſtinguiſhed by the elegant, and emphatic epithet, of the ſwiniſh multitude; an epithet expreſſive of their having lately diſturbed the feſtive board of their lords, and offended the delicate ears of the courtiers, by angry notes, and inharmonious accents, by grunting out complaints of the coldneſs of their ſties, and the ſcantineſs of their food.

leſs

leſs entitled to protection, than the other disfranchiſed citizens of Britain, they are ſubject to fine, impriſonment, and corporal puniſhment, at the diſcretion of their magiſtrates, who have long been ſuffered, with impunity, to alienate the common property of the boroughs, for their private emolument, to levy taxes, of their own authority, and to enforce their arbitrary exactions, by quartering ſoldiers, a refinement on the uſe of a ſtanding army, ſo much the more dangerous, that it can be practiſed without bloodſhed.

The ſpirit of the people of Scotland had long been broken by oppreſſion; to their ancient grievances was added, the ſeverity of the exciſe laws, which cruſhed their feeble efforts, and nipped

induſtry in the bud. The additional taxes on the neceſſaries of life made it impoſſible, until the late improvements in machinery, to carry manufactured commodities to a foreign market.

The manufacturers of Scotland have likewiſe ſuffered, in common with the Engliſh, from the deſtructive power which an imperfect and corrupt repreſentation gives to the miniſter, to grant a monopoly to the rich manufacturer, by increaſing the taxes on certain articles, and cruſhing the manufacturer of ſmall capital. Such abuſes are not to be feared from a patriotic miniſter, and a virtuous parliament, like the preſent; but a corrupt parliament, and an intriguing miniſter, might, by ſuch practices, totally annihilate commerce and liberty.

A com-

A compariſon of the American government with the boaſted conſtitution of Britain, naturally led the people of Scotland in general, and the burgeſſes in particular, to diſcuſs political queſtions, and to conſider of a remedy for the intolerable abuſes, to which they were aſhamed of having ſo long ſubmitted. They brought a bill into Parliament for a reform in the internal government of the boroughs, to make the magiſtrates accountable in a court of juſtice, for their adminiſtration of the public funds; for redreſs againſt arbitrary exactions; and to put a ſtop to the practice of ſelf-election, the foundation of a ſyſtem of corruption and tyranny, unequalled in the hiſtory of abuſes.

I was called upon to aſſiſt the burgeſſes in their laudable attempt; and

after their petitions had been for ſeveral years treated with inſolent contempt by the Miniſter, and neglected by the Houſe of Commons, I was aſtoniſhed to hear it propoſed, in the Convention of Delegates, that they ſhould not apply for a Parliamentary Reform, but only for a reform in the internal government of the boroughs. I declared it to be my opinion, that they could not expect redreſs without a reform in the repreſentation, which, in England, is but a mockery, and in Scotland, does not bear even the ſemblance of a real repreſentation.

If theſe ſentiments, and this conduct, are deſerving of the King's diſpleaſure, I confeſs that I heartily deſerve it.

While

While the people of Europe were contemplating, with aſtoniſhment, the ſucceſs of America, her peace, happineſs, and incredibly rapid increaſe of wealth, which immediately followed ten years of civil war:—While the diſfranchiſed citizens of Britain were looking, with admiration and envy, at a government ſupported at ſo little expence, which gives every encouragement to induſtry, and ſecures an equality of rights to all its members; the abettors of deſpotiſm, thoſe intereſted in the continuation of abuſes, were employing their venal pens to deride the American government, to perſuade the people that ſuch a government is fit for a poor and an infant ſtate only; that any reaſoning on the practice of it in America cannot be applied to the European States, where the manners of the people have

been long formed, and their characters fixed, and where the governments are moulded to the manners and character of the people; as if the minds of a whole nation could be ſo debilitated by the vices of its government, and ſo depraved by habit, as to prefer a government by the ſword to a government by reaſon, and arbitrary power to equal laws; as if men could be rendered, by long oppreſſion, incapable of the exerciſe of freedom, and inſenſible of the bleſſings of liberty, a deſire of which is common to every race of men, in every age, in every clime, and in every poſſible variety of ſituation; a deſire, planted by the hand of nature, and which cannot be extirpated by the ingenuity of man.

While the nations of Europe were looking to America for inſtruction, and,

and, in ſpite of all the exertions of proſtituted abilities to bewilder their judgment, were convinced of the ſuperiority of her government to their own, one of them reſolved to follow her example, to exerciſe the right, which every people derive from nature, to frame a government for themſelves. And the attention of the reſt of the world is arreſted by a brilliant experiment, to prove the general practicability of a repreſentative government.

All the former revolutions in Europe were only the ſtruggles of contending factions: the moſt beneficial of them did little more than eſtabliſh an ariſtocracy, I confeſs a mild one, on the ruins of the prerogative. That revolution ſettled a government comparatively mild, and improved what is called, perhaps improperly, civil liberty;

but, (leaving delegated power without controul,) afforded no ſecurity that it ſhould not be invaded; and the alterations in the conſtitution of Parliament, ſince that time, have reduced political liberty to an empty name.

Former revolutions had done no more then determine which of the privileged orders ſhould govern the community, and divide the plunder. The principle of the French revolution was to organize the community itſelf: though I do not contend that the work of the conſtituent aſſembly was conſiſtent with the principles on which they pretended to found it.

Aſſociations were formed in this country, at the end of the American war, after the nation had been long torn by faction, and exhauſted by peculation, for the purpoſe of reforming

the repreſentation: and though their reſolutions were garbled, and their views miſdirected by party cabal, and the intrigues of thoſe intereſted in the perpetuation of abuſes, they ſufficiently manifeſted the ſenſe of the nation; and bound, if any pledge can bind, the principal candidates for popular favour, by public declarations of their political principles, and particularly of their opinions reſpecting repreſentation. And the French conſtitution was no ſooner publiſhed in this country, than it was believed, that ſuch an example would induce the people to perfect the work, in which, they had lately failed; that Britons, who had ſo long boaſted of being free, would not ſubmit to a ſophiſticated government, when the French had founded theirs on the

principle, that all men are born free and equal.

The man who is bound by a law to which he has not conſented, is a ſlave; and I call our government ſophiſticated, becauſe, while the legiſlature is elected by a few, it is pretended that all are virtually repreſented. The disfranchiſing ſtatute of the time of Hen. VI. confirmed the government introduced by the conqueror; the Septennial Act was as glaring a violation of the conſtitution eſtabliſhed in 1688.

I have ever been of opinion, that unleſs theſe innovations be corrected, and the people reſtored to their elective rights, the conſtitution itſelf muſt be loſt; and I have, therefore, on all occaſions, declared myſelf to be a firm friend to reform—equal repreſentation, and annual parliaments.

I confeſs,

I confeſs, and I truſt, that I need not bluſh, when I confeſs, that in my correſpondence with all the ſocieties to which I belong, I have avowed it to be my moſt earneſt wiſh, that the French Revolution might produce a revolution in all the deſpotic governments of Europe, and a regeneration of our own.

We have a ſyſtem of juriſprudence excellent, in many reſpects, but ſo clogged with the remains of feudal barbarity, blended with modern fiction, as to be in many caſes inapplicable, and frequently inexplicable, and to create greater uncertainty than if no law exiſted; and which has been ſo confounded by the ſophiſtry of intriguing judges, that nothing but the ſtern virtue, perhaps, of the preſent bench, could prevent it from be-

coming a fit engine of deſpotiſm. By the tricks of practiſioners, and the extortion of the officers of the courts, though reprobated by the judges, who have but a ſmall ſhare of the fees, juſtice, if it may be ſo called, is become ſo expenſive, as to make the poor, in many caſes even the rich, ſilently ſubmit to injuſtice.

We have a hierarchy uſeleſs, expenſive, and diſgraceful. The tythes are a conſtant ſource of contention, a conſtant bar to improvement. The laws againſt Diſſenters would diſgrace the code of the moſt barbarous nation in the univerſe. I am not the advocate of Secretaries, but of liberty. I ſhould be ſorry to ſee the preſent eſtabliſhment give way to Preſbyterianiſm, or to any other form of church diſcipline: but I would have the word Toleration ex-

punged

punged from our Dictionary, as diſgracing the language of a nation that pretends to be free.

I did not heſitate to expreſs my ſatisfaction at the French Revolution, becauſe it was impoſſible to behold the ſtruggles of reviving Liberty, without rejoicing at their ſucceſs; becauſe, I conceive, that no man endowed with the feelings of humanity, can ſee a nation, ſubjected to the capricious cruelty of a few, without wiſhing that they may break their chains on the heads of their oppreſſors; becauſe I ſaw no reaſon to withhold the *unbought* tribute of my gratitude to thoſe generous Patriots, who reſtored, to Liberty and Happineſs, twenty millions of my fellow-

low-creatures. I ſaw no reaſon to be aſhamed, or afraid, to join in the general applauſe of a Revolution, which broke the chains of ſuperſtition and prieſt-craft, by diſperſing an army of robbers, and fiends, who had been allowed, for ſo many ages, to prey on the weakneſs of their fellow-men; and while they called themſelves the miniſters of charity and peace, to ſupport themſelves in luxury by extortion and fraud, and to acquire power and emolument, by ſtirring up, in the true ſpirit of the devil, nation againſt nation, and man againſt man.

If theſe be the ſentiments of a Leveller, and an Atheiſt, I am deſerving of both theſe epithets.

If I am to give an account of my opinions, as well as of my conduct, and I am aſked, What kind of government I think the beſt, I anſwer, that, as far as my ſhallow acquirements enable me to judge, a Repreſentative Government is the beſt. If I am aſked, Whether I think it neceſſary or prudent to give Britain a new Conſtitution, I anſwer, without heſitation, let us perfect the Saxon conſtitution, and we ſhall have little reaſon to envy the French, ſhould the conſtitution, they are about to eſtabliſh, be ever ſo perfect.

As a Briton I wiſh to ſee our government immediately reformed; becauſe I am perſuaded, that without an immediate and a thorough repair, the antient fabric muſt ſoon fall; becauſe I would avert from us, and from our children, the temporary evils which muſt attend a violent

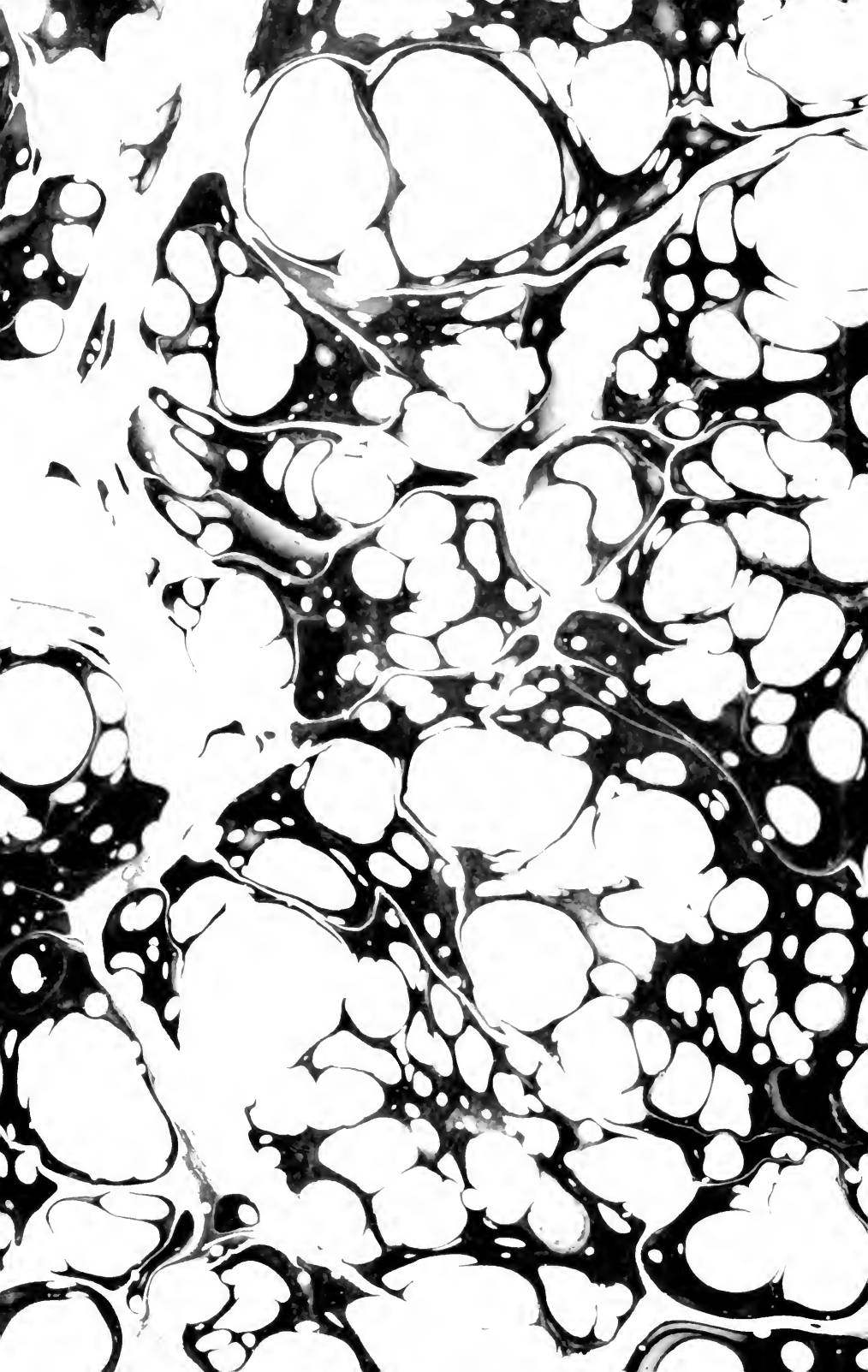
a violent Revolution, and even the ſmaller inconveniencies, which muſt attend the ſubverſion of antient forms. But no influence ſhall ever make me deny the great truth, that every people derive a right from nature, to alter their government when their ſafety requires it.

As a citizen of the world, I wiſh to ſee the French Republic confirmed, and the Britiſh Conſtitution perfected, as an experiment for the inſtruction of the world, which of the two is the beſt.

If this conduct, and theſe ſentiments, are deſerving of the King's diſpleaſure, I confeſs that I deſerve it: and I am at a loſs to gueſs, by what ſort of conduct, or profeſſions, I may hope for ſo great a ſatisfaction, as His Majeſty's good opinion.

I hope that the King will ſoon have Councellors wiſe enough to know, and honeſt

honeſt enough to tell him, that the real friends of Reform cannot be the enemies of order and peace. I ſhall then beg leave to approach His Majeſty, and to tell him, that I am not the enemy of peace and order, but that I am the avowed and determined enemy of thoſe vices, of which His Majeſty has ever been the enemy, unbounded ambition, tyranny, and peculation.

But I ſhould be unworthy of the good opinion of my country, I ſhould be unworthy of the title of freeman, once the pride of Britons, if I were capable of being deterred from my duty, by the diſpleaſure of a Prince, or the reſentment of a Miniſter.

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